

23rd February 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians

It was lovely to welcome students back on Monday and I trust families had an enjoyable half-term break. This week has seen our Trust-wide Equalities Week take place with a range of activities including external speakers, music, dance and cooking workshops and our Cultural Day on Wednesday which saw students and staff wearing clothes representing their cultures. I believe that, in our diverse community, there is more that unites us than divides us, and it is vital that we spend some time learning more about the different cultures that exist in our school. It has been an excellent week and I am grateful to Ms Poddar, Head of Computer Science and EDI Lead, for organising the events.

Education - the social contract

I have been spending time in our front office this week as I am conscious it is very much the front of the school and the first place our students and visitors see when they arrive. The busy atmosphere in the office and the variety of events, incidents and people the team deals with brought to mind the idea of the social contract between parents and schools that was in the media at the end of last year.

The media spoke about the idea of a social contract following the annual report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) of Education, Children's Services and Skills (click [here](#) for the full report). Amanda Spielman, who was writing for the final time as HMCI, felt that the social contract that 'bound parents and school together' was 'damaged' following the pandemic. She suggested that there has always been an 'unwritten agreement [that] sees parents get their children to school every day and respect the school's policies and approach. In return, schools give children a good education' and she feels this has 'been fractured' and there has been 'evidence to suggest that the attitudes of some parents are falling out of alignment with those of schools'.

As Headteacher, I am very much aware that we are responsible for the education of over 1200 young people and that we are made responsible for public money in order to provide that education. I am grateful that we have the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and guardians, and the fact that 93% of parents told Ofsted you would recommend this school is testament to that. I am also conscious that we have to make difficult decisions as school leaders and aim to ensure that, whilst parents and guardians may not always agree with the decisions, our rationale and explanation for any decision will always be made clear.

I am sure that parents and guardians are also aware that there is a serious recruitment crisis in education and that ensuring high-quality staff work at Ruislip High School is of vital importance and is also becoming increasingly challenging, as teachers and support staff could be financially better off working outside of education. With all of these elements in mind, I would like to remind parents and guardians that education works best when we are in partnership. I would always urge parents and guardians to let us know when there are questions or concerns and assure you that we will deal with those, and I would like to remind you of the importance of always treating staff with courtesy and respect, as I have seen in the majority of interactions I have seen this week.

I would welcome feedback from parents and guardians with your thoughts or ideas regarding this; please contact me with your feedback via the main school office. I will also add it as an agenda item to our next parent voice meeting.

KS4 options and website

Year 9 options evening will take place on Thursday 29th February 2024, 4.30-7pm with presentations and stalls for all options subjects and my talk at 4.45pm and 5.45pm. Please click [here](#) to see the letter previously shared with parents of Year 9 students and the options booklet and further information are available on our website (click [here](#)). I look forward to seeing Year 9 students and families on Thursday evening as they begin the process of choosing the subjects for further study. Should parents/guardians have any questions, please contact Mr Joseph, Head of Year 9, via the main school office.

Year 10 and 11 PPEs

Students in Years 10 and 11 are beginning their preparation for their pre-public examinations (PPEs) which take place in March. Students in Year 11 will sit PPEs for the core subjects of English, Maths and Science between 11th-14th March 2024. The timetable can be found [here](#) and I am pleased to share the 'Making the Grade' booklet for Year 11 again [here](#).

Year 10 PPEs will take place between 18th-22nd March 2024. The revision resources to help students prepare fully for these assessments at home and the timetable can be found [here](#).

Year 11 intervention

Year 11 students are impressing staff with the attitude of the vast majority of the year group, who are working hard in lessons and in preparation for their summer examinations. I am pleased to share with parents and guardians that there is a comprehensive programme in place to support key groups of students. Based on the December PPE results, a core group of students at risk of underachieving have been identified and there is a bespoke intervention programme in place. Mr Gibbs, Year 11 Academic Mentor, is overseeing the process which includes tuition for students in key subjects. Should your child be involved in tuition, you will have received a letter from Mr Shelley, Assistant Headteacher, with the full details.

There is further intervention taking place including Mr Peacock, Head of Sixth Form, meeting with students at risk of not attaining the grades for their chosen post-16 courses and the learning support faculty supporting students with literacy and numeracy skills. Year 11 students are also receiving additional support in the core subjects of English, maths and science during tutorial and we are trialling opening the LCC for Year 11 students before school and at social times to provide a quiet space for independent study. I am pleased that we are able to use the funding provided by the government post-pandemic to support with this tuition. Should parents/guardians have any questions about Year 11 and the programme of support, please contact Mr Sills, Head of Year 11, or Mr Gibbs, Year 11 Academic Director, via the main school office.

Daniel Spargo Foundation play and workshop - Year 9

On Friday 1st March 2024 the drug education charity, Daniel Spargo Foundation, will be presenting a play to Year 9. Students will watch Mark Wheeler's play 'I Love You, Mum - I Promise I Won't Die'. This is an emotional representation of a true life story where a child sadly dies from a drug overdose. Please click [here](#) for further information. Should you have concerns about your child attending this session please contact Mrs Stoodley, Pastoral Director, via the main school office.

Times of the day

I would like to remind parents/guardians that students should arrive between 8am-8.30am each day unless they are part of an Above & Beyond Club which starts before 8am. Some students are arriving at school before 8am and, whilst I welcome their enthusiasm, I would ask parents/guardians to ensure that students do not arrive early as they will not be able to gain access to the building or be supervised by staff before 8am.

Finally, I would like to wish all families a peaceful weekend.

Yours sincerely



Gareth Davies
Headteacher